

English E/III-A Reading Instruction and Practice Activities**Reading Strategy: Understanding the Elements of a Short Story**

With English reading material, there are many different kinds (genres) of material. Until now we have read newspaper and magazine articles. In these genres, the writer's goal is to present information to the reader as clearly as possible. Last week, we started reading Short Stories and this genre is very different from newspaper or magazine articles. In a short story, the writer shares with the reader his vision of the human experience. In order to help the reader understand his vision, the writer uses several important elements to tell his story – or how he sees life. If the reader is to fully understand what the writer is trying to tell him, it is very important to understand these elements.

Elements of the Short Story

Characterization:	Characterization is how a writer describes the characters (the people) in his story. In a short story the writer can't tell every detail about each character, but certain aspects are highlighted to give the reader an idea of who these characters really are. The writer does this by focusing on how a character, especially the main character, acts, speaks, thinks, and looks.
Plot:	Plot is how the writer arranges the action of the story. This arrangement is very important to help hold the reader's attention and help the reader move through the story.
Conflict:	Conflict is the tension or difference of opinion between characters. This tension is often an important part of the plot because the conflict often starts the action.
Dialogue:	Dialogue is the words that a character says; the speech between characters. An important part of characterization is shown in what the characters say in the dialogue.
Mood:	Mood is the <i>feeling</i> that the writer wants to create in the story. For example, the mood of a story might be sad, happy, mysterious, scary, etc.
Purpose:	Purpose is the reason the writer wrote the story. For example, the writer's purpose might be to amuse the reader, to scare the reader, to teach a lesson, etc.
Setting:	Setting is where and when the story takes place, or the time and place of the action in a story.
Theme:	Theme is the central topic or main idea of the story. For example, the theme might be friendship, family, revenge, greed, etc.

Activity 1 Reading Aloud With your group, read today's articles *out loud*. Take turns reading the articles sentence by sentence. Try to read each sentence from start to finish as smoothly as possible. Don't read like a robot and don't use KATAKANA ENGLISH.

Activity 2 With your group, answer these questions about the story so far Score: ____ /16

1. How does the writer describe these characters?

a. Mr. White

b. Mrs. White

c. Herbert White

d. Sergeant Morris

2. What is the setting of the story?

3. What conflicts are described in the story?

4. What is the mood of the story?

5. What is the purpose of the story?

Activity 3 Group Discussion

For the time remaining, discuss the following questions with your group. I expect everyone to participate by stating their opinions on each question, showing agreement or disagreement with your classmates opinions, and asking questions whenever you feel necessary. All discussions, must be in ENGLISH! If you get stuck and can't say what is in on your mind, ask your classmates or me for help.

1. What do you think are the main themes of this story?
2. Do you think this story will have a "happy" ending? Why/Why not?
3. If you were Mr. White would you make a wish with the monkey's paw? Why/Why not?
4. If you could make 3 wishes, what would you wish for?
5. Do you know of any other stories like this? What are they?
6. (your question) _____ ?
7. (your question) _____ ?

Activity 4 Discussion Summary

Take a few minutes and think about what you and your group mates discussed in class. Then, write a summary of your discussion. Please use all the space available.

Score: ____ /10

[illegible]